

Site Search Process and Selection

Section 16-50j-74(j) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires the applicant to submit a statement that describes "the narrowing process by which other possible sites were considered and eliminated." In accordance with this requirement, the description of the general site search process, the identification of the target search area and the alternative locations considered for development of the proposed Waterbury telecommunications facility are provided below.

As a tower developer, Optasite bases its decision to seek out a site in an area on its knowledge and understanding of existing weaknesses in the systems of the several wireless carriers operating in the area and/or consultation with individual carriers. A target area is chosen central to the area in which the coverage and/or capacity needs have been identified. The area targeted is the geographical location where the installation of a site would, based on general radio frequency engineering and system design standards, be likely to address the identified problem. Optasite's goal is to locate sites that will provide for orderly integration into the existing wireless systems of multiple carriers. In this case, T-Mobile had previously initiated a search for a site in this area and identified the proposed location. Subsequently, T-Mobile agreed to pursue development of a site through Optasite, and Nextel also identified a need for a site in the area and expressed interest in the proposed location.

Optasite is sensitive to State and local desires to minimize the construction of new towers, and does not initiate searches in areas with known acceptable structures. In the area of Waterbury that is the subject of this site search, there are no existing towers, transmission line structures or other suitable structures. Any existing towers are too far from the target area to provide coverage specifically to the target area.

In general, Optasite first studies the area to determine whether industrial or commercial areas or areas which have appropriate environmental and land use characteristics are present. Potential locations are studied by radio frequency engineers to determine whether the locations will meet the technical requirements for a site in the area. The list of potential locations is further refined based on the willingness of property owners to make their property available. Analysis of potential environmental effects and benefits may further narrow the alternatives. In each site search, the weight afforded to relevant factors may vary depending on the nature of the area and the availability of potential sites.

There are no large areas of commercial or industrial use in or next to the target area. Commercial properties are found in the area directly abutting Meriden Road. In general, those properties are small, fully developed and in proximity to residential development. Areas of relatively high elevation to the north of Meriden Road are heavily developed for residential use.

Optasite investigated numerous properties in the area surrounding the Pine Grove Cemetery location, including another property owned by the Pine Grove Cemetery located at 390 Meriden Road, depicted on the rejected site map as Site 2. That site was rejected because the property itself did not provide enough acreage for the required leased area. Another property investigated is owned by the Wolcott Land Trust on Celia Drive in Wolcott, depicted on the rejected site map as Site 3. Another is owned by the Town of Wolcott on 10 Kenea Drive in Wolcott, depicted on the rejected site map as Site 4. Both of these potential sites were rejected by T-Mobile since they were too far out of the search area to provide adequate coverage for this specific area of Waterbury and Wolcott. In addition, Optasite investigated property located at 1215 Meriden Road in Waterbury, depicted on the rejected site map as Site 5. Optasite was unable to successfully negotiate a suitable lease arrangement with the owner of this property. Finally, Optasite investigated locating a tower at property located at Rockaway Avenue, depicted on the rejected site map as Site 6. This site was rejected because it was only 2 acres, located in the middle of a residential neighborhood and the survey of the property indicated that the property contained extensive wetlands that would be disturbed by the construction of a tower.

The Pine Grove Cemetery property is superior to other properties in the area. Owned by the Pine Grove Cemetery Association, it is an approximately 104 acre parcel, significantly larger than others in the area. Portions of the property have been developed for burial use; however, large portions of the property remain undeveloped and wooded. Topographical features and vegetation afford significant screening of the proposed site.